

Arkansas Sheriff's Office Mines Bitcoin to Fuel Dark Web Investigations

Stan Higgins    Oct 30, 2017 at 15:05 UTC | Updated Oct 30, 2017 at 17:16 UTC

NEWS

A sheriff's office based in the US state of Arkansas is taking a novel approach to its investigations into online crime: mining bitcoin.

As reported by [local sources](#), investigators at the Benton County Sheriff's Office have started generating their own cryptocurrency to be used when trying to track the movements of criminals online. The pilot program, conducted through the office's Cyber Crimes Division, will focus on crimes such as the proliferation of child pornography, among other examples.

Speaking with TV news station KHBS earlier this month, Benton County detective David Undiano said that the pilot would help his office's investigators look into crimes that they might have previously been unequipped to handle.

He told the outlet:

"People are selling child pornography on the dark web and on the internet. They are accepting bitcoins, not payments. We can't use the sheriff's office credit card, and we can't exchange child pornography. We need some type of currency to get this and then identify who we are getting it from. That way, we can go arrest that person."

Not everyone in Benton County appears to be supportive of the policy, however.

Speaking with the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, prospective sheriff candidate Glenn Latham argued that the plan would ultimately result in a hefty bill for local taxpayers.

"These machines that they have to use draw a huge amount of power and cooling costs will go up. That's at the taxpayers' expense," he said.

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